

Amendments to the Claims:

Claims 28-30 and 32 have been amended as shown below. Underlines indicate insertions; ~~strikeouts~~ or double brackets [] indicate deletions.

1. (Previously presented). A trim press article handling apparatus, comprising:
 - a frame;
 - a punch carried by the frame;
 - a die carried by the frame and cooperating in relative movement with the punch to sever articles from a web;
 - a treadle carried for movement relative to the die, the treadle including a web guide member, a primary guide strip spaced from the guide member slightly greater than a thickness of the web, a secondary guide strip spaced from the guide member at least four thicknesses of the web and spaced apart from the primary guide strip, and an article detector carried by at least one of the primary guide strip and the secondary guide strip and operative to detect position of an article in the web by detecting the position of a protuberance in the web as the protuberance is conveyed between the primary guide strip and the secondary guide strip;
 - control circuitry communicating with the article detector and a drive motor operative to move the treadle, the control circuitry configured to receive an input signal from the article detector indicative of the position of a web-supported article relative to the

punch and the die, and operative to control operation of the drive motor to synchronize movement of the web-supported article via controlled motion of the treadle; and

a drive wheel assembly for moving a web and articles, the drive wheel assembly comprising a pair of roller feed assemblies provided on opposed edges of a web, wherein each of the roller feed assemblies comprises a drive release mechanism configured to release the roller feed assemblies from respective edges of the web, the release mechanism carried by the treadle and operative to cooperate with the die as the treadle is moved towards a stationary platen carrying the die.

2. (Original). The article handling apparatus of claim 1, wherein the knock lever mechanism comprises a kinematic linkage having a center pivot with the lever arm provided at one end of the kinematic linkage and the follower wheel provided at an opposite end of the kinematic linkage.

3. (Original). The article handling apparatus of claim 2, wherein movement of the treadle toward the platen and die imparts contact of the lever arm with the platen that imparts retraction of the follower wheel away from the drive wheel that opens up a gap therebetween and releases a respective edge of a web carried therebetween to enable lateral adjustment of the web and articles when centering the articles during a severing operation.

4-10. (Cancelled).

11. (Previously presented). The apparatus of claim 14, wherein the article detector is carried by at least one of the primary guide strip and the secondary guide strip and operative to detect a position of an article in the web by detecting a position of a protuberance in the web as the protuberance is conveyed between the primary guide strip and the secondary guide strip.

12. (Previously presented). The apparatus of claim 14, wherein the gap between the primary guide strip and the guide member is greater than a thickness of the web of material.

13. (Previously presented). The apparatus of claim 14, wherein the second guide strip is spaced at least four thicknesses of the web and spaced apart from the primary guide strip.

14. (Previously presented). A trim press article handling apparatus, comprising:
a punch and a die carried by a frame, the die cooperating with the punch to sever articles from a web of thermoformable material;

a treadle carried for movement relative to the die, the treadle including a web guide member, a primary guide strip disposed adjacent the web guide member, a

secondary guide strip spaced from the guide member, and an article detector to detect a position of an article in the web;

control circuitry communicating with the article detector, and a drive motor operative to move the treadle; and

a drive wheel assembly for moving the web and the articles, the drive wheel assembly comprising a pair of roller feed assemblies provided on opposed edges of the web, wherein each of the roller feed assemblies comprises a drive release mechanism carried by the treadle, configured to cooperate with the die as the treadle is moved towards a stationary platen carrying the die, and configured to release the roller feed assemblies from a respective edge of the web in response to cooperation of the drive release mechanism with the die;

wherein the control circuitry is configured to receive an input signal from the article detector, the input signal being indicative of the position of an article relative to the punch and the die, the control circuitry being operative to control operation of the drive motor to synchronize movement of the article via controlled motion of the treadle.

15-27. (Cancelled).

28. (Currently amended). A trim press article handling apparatus, comprising:

a punch and a die carried by a frame, the die cooperating with the punch to sever articles from a web of thermoformable material;

a treadle configured to move relative to the die, the treadle including a web guide member, a primary guide strip disposed adjacent the web guide member, a secondary guide strip spaced from the guide member, and an article detector to detect a position of an article in the web;

control circuitry communicating with the article detector; and

a drive motor configured to move the treadle; and

a drive wheel assembly for moving a web and articles, the drive wheel assembly comprising a pair of roller feed assemblies provided on opposed edges of the web, wherein each of the roller feed assemblies comprises a drive release mechanism carried by the treadle, configured to cooperate with the die as the treadle is moved towards a stationary platen carrying the die, and configured to release the roller feed assemblies from a respective edge of the web in response to cooperation of the drive release mechanism with the die;

wherein the control circuitry is configured to receive an input signal from the article detector indicative of position of an article relative to the treadle and control operation of the drive motor to move the treadle and the article relative to the punch and the die for synchronized severing of the article from the web.

29. (Currently amended). The trim press article handling apparatus of claim 28, further comprising a kinematic linkage coupled between the treadle and a platen that

supports the punch, the platen driven for movement by the drive motor and operative to move the treadle with the kinematic linkage and the platen.

30. (Currently amended). The trim press article handling apparatus of claim ~~28~~29, wherein the ~~roller feed assemblies are provided on opposed edges of the web~~ kinematic linkage comprises a rocker arm for proportionately reciprocating the treadle relative to the platen.

31. (Previously presented). The trim press article handling apparatus of claim 28, further comprising a knock lever mechanism is carried by the treadle.

32. (Currently amended). The trim press article handling apparatus of claim 28, wherein ~~a lever arm of the knock lever~~ the drive release mechanism is configured to ~~contact~~ communicate with the die as the treadle is moved towards a stationary platen carrying the die, and a follower wheel ~~of the knock lever mechanism~~ is configured to retract from a respective drive wheel in response to ~~contact of the lever arm~~ communication of the drive release mechanism with the die to enable ~~the lateral centering of the web.~~

33. (Previously presented). The article handling apparatus of claim 1, wherein the drive release mechanism comprises a knock lever mechanism having a lever arm and a follower wheel, the lever arm configured to contact the die as the treadle is moved

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towards a stationary platen carrying the follower wheel, and the follower wheel is configured to retract from the respective drive wheel in response to contact of the lever arm with the die.